



Grass Routes

Washington State Rural Transportation Newsletter

Winter 2004

Skamania County Starts New Bus Service

A ribbon-cutting event commemorating the inaugural run of new bus service was held January 12 in Stevenson, Washington. Skamania County officials, community members, and supporters joined the celebration to kick off the new Skamania County Public Transit bus service, a demonstration project serving Skamania and east Clark Counties.

The new bus service is coordinated by Skamania County Senior Services. Two 16-passenger buses are used to provide three trips each weekday along State Route 14 between Carson and Vancouver.

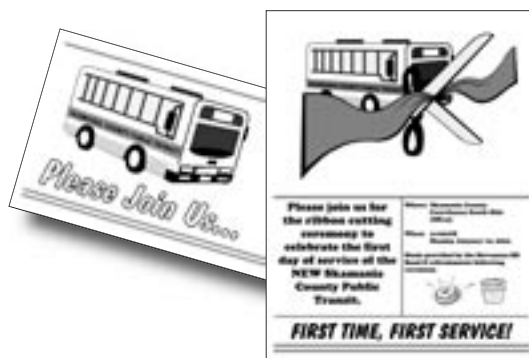
The round-trip service originates in Carson with stops in Stevenson, North Bonneville, and Skamania and ends at the C-TRAN Transit Center at Fisher's Landing in Vancouver. The service is available to all Skamania County residents for a fare of fifty cents each way.

Skamania County Public Transit was created to help meet the transportation needs of Skamania County's senior citizens, youth, persons with disabilities, persons of low income, and general public. The new service provides access, mobility, and independence to Skamania County residents by helping rural residents get to jobs, school, and training.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) awarded a \$193,000 public transportation grant to fund the first year of bus service. This is one of many projects



Darlene Dickson and Commissioner Al McKee cut the ribbon commemorating Skamania County Public Transit's inaugural bus service.



funded through the new rural mobility grant program created by the 2003 Washington State Legislature to help communities with limited or no public transportation. During this demonstration project, Skamania County officials plan to start the process of establishing a formal transit system. It will be up to the community to determine if they want to fund ongoing transit service.

Over 250 passengers rode the bus during the first month of service, and ridership is growing daily. So far, the bus has "not run empty" with at least one person riding on every trip. For more information on the new bus service, call Skamania County Public Transit at (509) 427-9466.



Skamania County Commissioners Bob Talent, Al McKee, and Bud Quinn accept a symbolic check from Judith Gninger, WSDOT's Public Transportation and Rail Director.

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COULDN'T GET WHERE THEY NEED TO GO.
HOW WOULD THAT AFFECT YOU?**

People from all walks of life rely on public transportation every day because their communities rely on them. Whether it means volunteering, going to work, going to class or visiting family and friends. And when people thrive, communities thrive. Find out why public transportation helps us all. Visit www.publictransportation.org.

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Wherever life takes you

©2004 Public Transportation Partnership for Tomorrow

PT² print ads like this one convey the message that public transportation affects us all because when people thrive, communities thrive.

PT² Builds Support Through Advertising Campaign

Public Transportation Partnership for Tomorrow (PT²), an education and outreach program of the American Public Transportation Association, is running a new national advertising campaign that focuses on the community benefits of public transportation—whether you ride it or not.

The advertising plays an important role in educating elected officials, opinion leaders, and the general public on the important contributions public transportation makes in our communities. The campaign includes television commercials, radio spots, transit signage, and print ads.

To help increase community support and investment in public transportation, PT² partners are encouraged to customize the advertising materials and run them locally. To see sample advertisements, visit www.PublicTransportation.org, a PT² web site designed to help educate and engage people in public transportation issues.



The 2004 Public Transportation Directory is Coming Soon

The Washington State Public Transportation Directory will be available by the end of March. The annual directory provides contact information for public transportation partners including transit systems, Medicaid brokerages, specialized transportation, intercity bus operators, government agencies, transportation associations, and planning organizations. WSDOT produces the directory as a reference tool and publishes it on our web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit. Hard copies will also be available, while supplies last, by calling (360) 705-7911.



Grass Routes is a quarterly publication of the Washington State Department of Transportation and is brought to you through the Federal Transit Administration's Rural Transit Assistance Program.

The newsletter is distributed free of charge to public transit systems, tribal transit providers, agencies providing human service transportation, intercity bus carriers, and other interested individuals and organizations. *Grass Routes* is also published at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit.

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Rider Tidbits

"It's freedom!"

Dial-a-Ride Comes Through for Alger Accident Victim

Ed Stauffer of Alger knew he would need help getting around. Though he had survived a traumatic cave-in last August while repairing an underground culvert on his rural property, the accident had left him with a broken leg and a crushed pelvis. Only after he returned home to recover did Ed face one of his most troublesome challenges yet: making his way back to the doctor's office for an important follow-up.

"Flat on my back and in braces," he explained, "there was no way my wife could get me to the doctor. We were stuck for transportation."

And not just any transportation. For the first few weeks of his recovery, Ed would require a wheelchair-equipped vehicle, complete with a hoist—not something the average person keeps in their garage. Obviously his wife couldn't lift him in and out of a regular vehicle, either. In September, when his doctor's appointment drew near, Ed called Skagit Transit (SKAT) for help.

As it turned out, SKAT was in the initial phase of developing a Dial-a-Ride program to serve outlying customers



Ed Stauffer outside his home in Alger

like the Stauffers. Although the equipment was ready (including a handicap-accessible van with lift), other pieces of the program (including drivers) weren't yet in place. Even so, Ed explained, the Executive Director of SKAT, Dale O'Brien, "took it upon himself to see if there was something he could do." There was. Before long a van showed up at the Stauffer's front door, as Ed tells it, "with the boss driving."

Thanks to the director's extra effort Ed made his critical first appointment, and the next. Dale was assisted by Robin Trevino, while Brad Stevens and Wade Mahala helped on the second run. Each time after the appointment was over, the new Dial-a-Ride service picked Ed up and brought him home.

Naturally Ed was grateful for the rides, for the independence and freedom public transportation brought him. "That's what really impressed me," he said, "when you get a public agency that takes the initiative to ask, 'What can I do to help?'"

After about four months, Ed is now off his crutches. But the recovery wouldn't have been as easy without SKAT's help. "I don't

know what I would have done if I hadn't gotten to the doctor," he said.

Ed's story was recently highlighted in SKAT Times.

Public Transportation Facts

Source: American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

- ❑ Public transportation is a \$32 billion industry that employs more than 350,000 people.
- ❑ Public transportation ridership has increased 22 percent in the last six years.
- ❑ APTA estimates that about 14 million Americans ride on public transportation each weekday.
- ❑ Americans took more than 9.5 billion public transportation trips in 2001.
- ❑ Transit usage is at an all time high and increased by 6.4 percent in the decade from 1990-2000.
- ❑ More than half (54 percent) of all public transportation trips are made by commuters to work, while 46 percent are trips to school, shopping, medical appointments, and entertainment facilities.
- ❑ Nearly 20 percent of all transit trips are taken by people over the age of 65 or under 18.
- ❑ The need for public transportation is great. One in four households have no access to public transportation. Half of those have only limited service.
- ❑ Every \$1 invested in public transportation projects generates \$6 in local economic activity.
- ❑ Every \$1 billion invested in public transportation infrastructure supports approximately 47,500 jobs.
- ❑ For every mile traveled, public transportation uses about one half of the fuel consumed by automobiles, and about a third of that used by sport utility vehicles and light trucks.

Washington Recognized as National Leader in Human Services Transportation

The Federal Transit Administration selected Washington's Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) for the "United We Ride" Leadership Award, recognizing the significant steps the state has taken to improve human service transportation options for its 1.5 million citizens with special needs including individuals with disabilities, older adults, low income families, and people who depend on transit.

The award was accepted by Gov. Gary Locke in Washington, D.C., during the "United We Ride: National Leadership Forum on Human Service Transportation Coordination" on February 23-25. "On behalf of the state of Washington, thank you for this award," Locke said at the presentation ceremony. "Let's continue to unite in this worthwhile

and humane cause and refuse to let the world pass any American by."

The award reflects Washington's leadership in coordinating human service transportation. Washington was the first state in the nation to define coordination by statute through the creation of ACCT. The Council provides a structure for seven state agencies and over 200 transportation providers to work together to assure access to services for people with special needs for transportation.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is the lead agency for ACCT. "By working together with groups such as social services, schools, and transit providers, we have expanded opportunities for human service agencies to provide more rides to customers," said Paula Hammond, ACCT chair

and WSDOT chief of staff. "We are one of the few states in the country doing this type of outreach and coordination."

Washington was one of five states invited to make a presentation at the leadership forum. Judith Giniger and Don Chartock of WSDOT gave an overview of how Washington State is working toward the development of cost-effective public transportation services, enhanced level of service for more people, and increased access to healthcare, human services, job related activities, educational, and other aspects of community participation.

For more information, visit www.fta.dot.gov or www.wsdot.wa.gov/acct.

Bus Island Opens as Multi-Modal Hub Takes Shape

Phase I of the new Skagit Multi-Modal Center is complete and Skagit Transit (SKAT) buses are already beginning to use the new paved bus island at the downtown Mount Vernon site. In addition to the island, the first phase of the project added a paved parking lot with two driveways to Kincaid Street and two more driveways from 4th Street for access to Montgomery.

The center takes its place as the first-ever permanent multi-modal hub for SKAT riders, replacing earlier temporary arrangements. When phase II is completed in July, the hub will offer unprecedented new access to Greyhound, taxis, and Amtrak, all in one place. The center will open access via rail to Bellingham's waterfront multi-modal center, as well as rail and bus line links with the Alaska Ferry system. It's an "all in one" solution to getting around in Northwest Washington ... and beyond.

Between now and July, construction continues on the station building and train platform. Workers will also add more pavement plus a new traffic signal and railroad crossing at Montgomery and 3rd Street. Eventually Gates Street will be closed at the railroad tracks, so Montgomery or Kincaid Streets will provide new access to the station.



Two SKAT buses making a quick stop at their new transit station.

Funding for the \$5.6 million project comes from a variety of sources, with most about 82 percent from federal grants. The downtown Mount Vernon site is just south of I-5 between SR 536 and Kincaid, by the Old Town Grainery.



Buying Buses in Bulk Saves Big Bucks

Public transportation grant recipients are saving money by purchasing minibuses through WSDOT's group vehicle purchase program. On behalf of 13 organizations, WSDOT developed specifications and put together a request for bids for buying 37 minibuses, scheduled for delivery this summer.

The total bid for manufacturing the 37 minibuses was approximately \$1.6 million dollars. By consolidating their vehicle purchases, participants are able to get minibuses for approximately \$43,000, depending on options, instead of the up to \$60,000 it may have cost to purchase the vehicles individually. Participants in WSDOT's group vehicle purchase program are:

Appointment Keepers
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Hopelink
Kittitas County Community Action Council
Klickitat County Senior Services
Lower Columbia Community Action Council
Olympic Bus Lines
People for People-Moses Lake
People for People-Yakima
Pullman Senior Citizens Association
Pullman Transit
Senior Services of Snohomish County
Twin Transit

It's not too late to participate in the program. WSDOT has an option to purchase up to 18 additional vehicles at similar prices. Some of the advantages of WSDOT's group vehicle purchases are:

- ❑ The most economical prices are obtained by buying in bulk through a competitive bid process.
- ❑ Vehicles meet all state and federal safety standards.
- ❑ It's less work—someone else with the technical

expertise handles the bid process and factory inspections.

If you are interested in purchasing a vehicle or want more information about WSDOT's group vehicle purchases, please contact Jerry Ayres at (360) 705-7912 or ayresj@wsdot.wa.gov.



Transportation providers can save money through WSDOT's consolidated bid program when purchasing vehicles like this Supreme StarTrans Senator minibuss manufactured by Emmett Koelsch Coaches.

Barb Savary Tackles New Challenges



Barb Savary

Barb Savary has been promoted to a project position as the **Transit Safety and Asset Management Specialist**. Barb started with WSDOT in 1992 assisting with the public transportation grant programs. Since that time, she has been involved with many aspects of program development as well as dealing with complex grant compliance issues such as the FTA Drug and Alcohol Testing Program. Most

recently she managed the Rural Transportation Assistance Program, including acting as co-chair for the Washington State Transportation Training Coalition.

"Over the years I have enjoyed meeting and working with transportation providers across the state. I'm looking forward to this new opportunity to assist the transit industry in addressing the maintenance planning requirements imposed by the state legislature in 2002," said Barb. Her new responsibilities are to:

- ❑ Assist transit agencies with the new state requirement for a Transit Asset Management program
- ❑ Provide assistance to the public transportation industry in addressing safety, security, and emergency management issues and best practices

Barb will be working with members of the Washington State Transit Association's Maintenance Committee to identify guidelines that will meet the needs of all transit systems. She can be reached at (360) 705-7926 or at savaryb@wsdot.wa.gov.

Explore Transportation Connections at WSDOT's Public Transportation Conference 2004

Mark your calendar for WSDOT's 28th Annual Public Transportation Conference on August 23-25, 2004, at the newly expanded Yakima Convention Center in Yakima, Washington.

"Exploring Transportation Connections" is the theme for this year's conference, which will include informative workshops, presentations, and networking opportunities. The conference will stimulate ideas and discussions on ways we can improve connections between our communities and better integrate different modes of transportation.

We will continue our most popular traditions at this year's conference. Once again, we will honor Washington's best and brightest transportation employees on the Wall of Fame and at the Recognition and Awards Banquet. And, conference attendees will have the opportunity to see professional bus operators, specialized transportation operators, and mechanics compete at the state Public Transportation Rodeo hosted by the Washington State Transit Association.

We are also expanding the conference to explore how local transit and other modes of public transportation, including intercity rail and bus, ferries, and other providers

work together in Washington State. We will explore the ways in which all aspects of public transportation can be better integrated into local, regional, and state-wide transportation planning efforts. We believe conference attendees will benefit from an expanded program showcasing the efforts of our colleagues involved in the rich variety of public transportation modes, in transportation planning, and in the unique issues and approaches of tribal transportation.

To help us plan the program, we want to hear about workshop topics and speakers of interest to you. We invite you to submit your suggestions by March 31 by completing a "Call for Workshops" form available on our web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/conference or by calling (360) 705-7911.

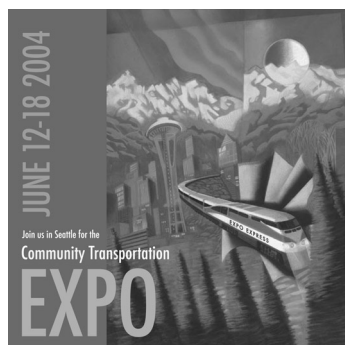


Community Transportation Hosts EXPO 2004 in Seattle

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) selected Washington State for the location of the 2004 EXPO. With this dynamic national conference so close, this is one event you won't want to miss. Make your plans to attend the June 12-18 event in Seattle.

Training and professional development will once again be the hallmarks of the transportation conference. This year's conference includes the timeliest set of 1-, 2- and 3-day conference

intensive training sessions ever staged. A set of all-new professional development workshops are also designed to give you useful tools.



The 7-day conference is packed with activities including the national rodeo championships, trade fair, and special events. The 2004 Community Transportation Rodeo will be held June 12-13, at King County Metro and our host hotel. The expansive Trade

Fair will hold all of the latest and greatest products in the public and

community transportation fields. CTAA is also planning an expanded gala awards dinner this year, and the Big Night Out promises to be an evening not to be missed!

To encourage participation in the event, CTAA is offering some "Seattle Perks":

- ❑ All Community Transportation Association of the Northwest members will receive at least \$150 off their registration.
- ❑ New this year, register four people in your organization and get your fifth registration free!

To register, visit www.ctaa.org or call (800) 788-7077.



WSTCC Training Calendar Set for 2004

By Tracey Christianson, WSTIP

The Washington State Transportation Training Coalition (WSTTC) is finalizing the training calendar for 2004. The class topics were selected based on a survey completed by coalition members.

Five tracks will be offered in 2004: Safety and Security, Supervision and Leadership, Skill Development, Maintenance, and Operations. Approximately four classes will be offered in each track.

The Coalition is committed to providing low-cost training for transportation employees. Most classes are held in the Olympia area and typically cost \$50 per training day. Registration is open to all public, private, profit, and non-profit employees working in the transportation industry.

The WSTTC is a partnership between the Department of Transportation, Washington State Transit Association, Community Transit Association of the Northwest, the Washington State Transit Insurance Pool, and Eastern Washington University Tribal Technical Assistance Program.

Visit the WSTTC web site at www.wsttc.org for workshop information and on-line registration.

Upcoming WSTTC Workshops

Shop Management

March 31-April 1, Olympia

Communication Skills

April 20, Olympia

Verbal Judo (1 day class)

Hosted by Pierce Transit

April 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30, Lakewood

Media Relations

May 10, Olympia

Public Speaking / Presentation Skills

Hosted by People for People

June 1-2, Moses Lake

New Supervisor's School

September 22-24, Olympia

- ❑ Moving from Peer to Supervisor
- ❑ Conflict Resolution for New Supervisors
- ❑ Legal Issues for New Supervisors

Preventing the Most Common Maintenance Accidents and Injuries

December 2, Olympia

Link Transit to Host Transit Marketing Session

By Eric West, Link Transit

Link Transit will host a free training session on marketing for small transit agencies, sponsored by the National Transit Institute (NTI). This session will be held on Monday, June 21, at Link Transit's Operation Base in Wenatchee, Washington, beginning at 8:30 a.m. and wrapping up around 4:30 p.m. There is no cost to attend this session, other than \$10 for lunch and refreshments.

Paul Foer, Marketing Specialist with the Annapolis, Maryland Department of Transportation and NTI Fellow, is the developer and presenter of this program. During his 6-year tenure with the transit system, ridership doubled and in May 2002, *Metro Magazine* named Annapolis Transit one of the Ten Most Improved Transit Systems.

Paul's workshop teaches attendees how to develop low-cost marketing initiatives that can improve service, increase ridership, and promote a valuable public image. His workshop teaches why marketing:

- ❑ Starts with customer interaction at all levels
- ❑ Is not necessarily (and in some cases should not be) about advertising or promotion
- ❑ Depends on identifying and using community influence points
- ❑ Does not have to cost a lot of money
- ❑ Includes developing partnerships with natural constituents
- ❑ Involves regular contact and rapport with media and local leaders

Paul will give examples of:

- ❑ How to get free radio, TV, and other media coverage
- ❑ How to get others to advertise for you at their own expense
- ❑ How transit agencies and local schools and colleges can help each other

Participants will leave the workshop with guidelines for developing a basic marketing plan that they can use to guide their marketing efforts and allocate resources. If you are interested in attending this session, or having someone from your agency attend, please let Eric West know by March 30. You may e-mail your interest to eric@linktransit.com, or reach him by phone at (509) 662-5919.

Relationships Help BFT Build Partnerships

By Christy Watts, Ben Franklin Transit

It is true that relationships are everything. This is particularly evident in the partnership Ben Franklin Transit enjoys with the local retailers that serve as pass and ticket outlets for the transit agency. In the central Benton and Franklin County service area that includes six cities with a combined population of approximately 172,000, Ben Franklin Transit is fortunate to have 23 retail locations and 12 human service agencies that sell and distribute fixed route and paratransit bus tickets and passes.

Sharon Roylance, the Ben Franklin Transit Customer Service Representative who services the pass outlets, has this to say about her customers, "I have been greatly impressed with the people I work with at the various sales locations, especially by their desire and willingness to help our shared

customers. Ben Franklin Transit's pass and ticket outlets take great pride in the quantities they sell. One would think there was a prize for the retailer who sells the most. I believe the prize is their pride in serving our mutual customers and the community."

Sharon, a 21-year Ben Franklin employee, takes great pride in her job and the relationships she has built over the years with the retailers that serve as sales locations. It is those relationships that help to maintain a network of locations to more conveniently serve our customers needs. "I treasure the friends I have made in my monthly visits to the various pass and ticket locations," stated Sharon. "I have made countless friends and with those friends have shared many of life's experiences. These relationships have added greatly to my life."



Sharon Roylance works with retailers in the community that serve as BFT's pass and ticket outlets.

It is also true that these relationships have greatly added to the efficiency that Ben Franklin Transit strives for in serving the community.

WTA Increases Bike Carrying Capacity on Buses

By Maureen Camandona, Whatcom Transportation Authority

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) buses can now accommodate a third bike on front-mounted bike racks. Previously WTA's fixed route fleet was equipped with 2-bike racks. The agency had been testing ten of the 3-bike racks for ease of operation since they became available on the market in September. Like the previous model, bike racks allow passengers to load and unload their own bikes.

Bike racks have grown increasingly popular with WTA passengers. Soon after their initial introduction, passengers began requesting increased capacity. Users of the racks include those who bike commute one-way, and make the return trip by bus, as well as many who



A WTA passenger loads his bike on the bus using a new 3-bike bus rack.

reach their destination by a combination bike ride and bus ride.

WTA General Manager, Richard Walsh, said, "When it comes to transportation alternatives, one size doesn't fit all. By making the bike-plus-bus commute an option, we offer an alternative to people who might not otherwise ride their bike or ride the bus—people who usually drive alone."

WTA was the first transit system in Washington State and, as far as the supplier knows, only the third in the nation to equip its entire fixed route fleet with the 3-bike racks.

For information on WTA's bike rack program, call 676-RIDE or visit www.ridewta.com.

New Faces at WSDOT

WSDOT's Public Transportation and Rail Division is pleased to introduce our new staff members:



Theresa Smith

Theresa Smith has been appointed to the newly created position of **Policy and Planning Manager** with division-wide responsibility related to planning and policy matters. Theresa previously served eight years for WSDOT's Aviation Division where she managed and developed strategic long-range plans, financial planning, and the public outreach program.

Prior to joining WSDOT, she served as a consultant to the Link Multimodal Facility in Wenatchee and the EIS for third runway development at Sea-Tac Airport. Smith served as professional staff on the U.S. House Subcommittee on Aviation.

Theresa brings her multimodal experience to the division and believes an important part of her job is to market the economic benefits of public transportation to community leaders. Theresa said, "Public transportation brings people to business centers for employment where they purchase goods and services." Theresa's primary responsibilities are to:

- ❑ Define the state's role and interest in public transportation
- ❑ Deliver the public transportation portion of the Washington Transportation Plan
- ❑ Increase the division's involvement in public transportation issues in the Central Puget Sound by representing the division in numerous regional forums
- ❑ Work with local communities to build support for key transportation initiatives



Robin Phillips

Robin Phillips accepted the position of **Administrator for Coordinated Transportation**. Robin came to us from the Public Transit Division of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) where she was responsible for the development and implementation of their statewide Intercity Bus Program, rural Job Access,

Bi-State Trip Planner, and coordination of intercity and transit issues with ODOT's Rail and Planning Divisions.

Robin will work closely with Washington's Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) on their goals to identify and address barriers, focus on results, and increase advocacy. "Washington is recognized nationwide as one of the leading states in coordinated transportation and I'm looking forward to helping move us to the next level," said Robin. Her responsibilities are to:

- ❑ Develop coordination performance measures
- ❑ Oversee special needs transportation programs
- ❑ Implement the Bi-State Trip Planner
- ❑ Manage program and improvements for the intercity bus program



Patty Alvord

Patty Alvord joined the public transportation contracts and grants team as the new **Compliance and Planning Specialist**. Her decades of experience in rural public transportation, transit grants, procurements, and federal regulations are a great asset. Prior to joining WSDOT, Patty served nine years as the General Manager of Twin Transit in Centralia and held various positions with the

agency since the Public Transit Benefit Area was created in 1976.

As a life-long advocate for public transportation, Patty said, "I'm pleased to continue working in the transit industry while trying a new role. I'll be able to relate to transportation providers involved in WSDOT's grant program." Patty's responsibilities are to:

- ❑ Monitor grantees for performance and compliance with state and federal regulations through reporting, financial tracking, and site visits
- ❑ Provide technical assistance in the form of transportation planning and contract compliance
- ❑ Report to the Federal Transit Administration on performance of federally funded projects

Our new staff members are eager to work with you and can be reached by calling WSDOT's Public Transportation and Commute Options Office at (360) 705-7922.



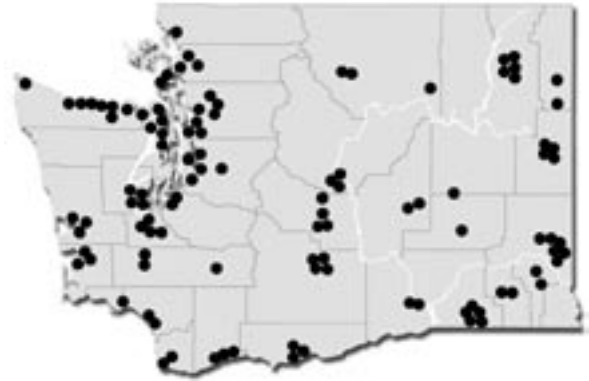
Public Transportation Grants Are at Work Across the State

WSDOT awarded public transportation grants last summer to the highest number of projects ever funded through the state's grant program. Every county in the state is receiving funding for at least one public transportation project and most of the projects are now underway.

The goal of WSDOT's public transportation grant program is to help provide access, mobility, and independence to Washington residents. During this 2003-2005 grant cycle, funds are used to assist transportation providers with a variety of operating and capital projects including:

- ❑ purchasing 188 vehicles including vans, minibuses, and 35-foot coaches
- ❑ providing transportation services within and between cities
- ❑ providing public transportation service for persons with special needs
- ❑ improving public transportation in and between rural communities
- ❑ preserving existing service in communities that are facing budget shortfalls
- ❑ providing new services in rural communities and connecting services between communities

WSDOT's 2003-2005 Public Transportation Grant Projects



Grants are improving public transportation for residents and communities throughout Washington.

- ❑ extending transit services into the evening and on the weekends
- ❑ purchasing dispatching and scheduling software to make transit services more efficient

Grant recipients include transit systems, non-profit agencies, tribal governments, senior centers, cities, counties, and for profit transportation providers. For more information on WSDOT's public transportation grant programs, visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit.

Coordination Leads to Successful Startup in Upper Snoqualmie Valley

By Jim Seek, Hopelink

The Mt. Si Community Shuttle, a program WSDOT helped fund with a Special Needs grant to Mt. Si Senior Center, began service on November 17, 2003. The shuttle operates as a one vehicle, general public dial-a-ride serving the Upper Snoqualmie Valley. The project is the result of the long-term efforts of Mt. Si Senior Center, Hopelink & United Way of King County, and recent partners: King County Metro, Senior Services of Seattle/King County, and the city of Snoqualmie.

The service area, which includes the foothills surrounding North Bend and Snoqualmie in eastern King County, has very limited public transit service. As senior center director Ruth Tolmasoff puts it, "If you can drive,

you're okay, if not, transportation can be a real problem."

Jill, who phoned-in the Shuttle's first ever ride request and continues to ride, faces a typical dilemma. She finishes work at the outlet mall in North Bend in the late afternoon and must go to two different childcare facilities to pick up her infant and school-age daughter before returning home. Total distance? Over four miles! Before the shuttle started, Jill and her girls often had to walk this far in the dark, in the cold, and much of it along the shoulders of roads. On her first trip Jill exclaimed, "This [service] is a godsend! I won't have to worry about my kids getting sick or watching out for cars."

To enhance coordination, the shuttle scheduler also dispatches rides for



Jill and her daughters were the first customers on the Mt. Si Community Shuttle.

the Mt. Si Senior Shuttle. Plans are to expand scheduling to include the Carnation-based senior shuttle and a new special needs shuttle in the Lower Valley, the latter also supported by a WSDOT grant to Senior Services.

In its first two and a half months, the Mt. Si Community Shuttle has transported 1,285 customers at greater than two passengers per service hour.

WSDOT Releases Summary of Public Transportation

WSDOT released the annual *Summary of Public Transportation Systems – 2002*. Interesting findings include:

- ❑ More than 5 million residents, approximately 87 percent of the state's total population, had access to some form of public transportation service in 2002.
- ❑ In 2002 transit delivered over 155 million passenger trips in our state—a 2.25 percent decrease compared to 2001 ridership levels.
- ❑ Voters approved four of six taxing propositions to increase local sales tax rates for public transportation in 2002. Residents of Pierce Transit, Ben Franklin Transit, Whatcom Transportation Authority, and Intercity Transit's

service areas approved 0.3 percent sales and use tax increases. Residents of Skagit Transit and Spokane Transit Authority's service areas rejected propositions to increase their local tax rates for public transportation.

- ❑ Statewide, local tax revenues increased 7.35 percent compared to 2001 figures.

The 216-page public transportation summary provides a statewide overview of transit service for the years 2000 through 2002, and planning figures for 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2009. The report also describes the services, achievements, and objectives



for the 26 governmental transit operators in the state. WSDOT compiles annual operational and financial data from each transit operator and provides copies of the report to the state legislature.

The public transportation summary is available on-line at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit.

CTR Task Force Submits 2003 Report to the Legislature

After months of preparation, the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Task Force submitted its 2003 Report to the Washington State Legislature. The report reviews the state's CTR program's performance and recommends a legislative strategy to achieve even greater success in the future.

The focus on this year's report is on worksites that began implementing CTR in 1993. Representing well over half of the worksites in the program—and most of the trip reduction—these 525 sites have consistent data since 1993. Looking at them allows the Task Force to describe changes employees at CTR sites have made over time.

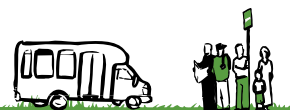
The state invested \$2.65 million in the CTR program in 2003. The CTR Task Force concludes that the



CTR program plays a significant role in creating the following benefits:

- ❑ 6.2 percent less delay than would have been experienced in the Puget Sound region
- ❑ \$24 million savings in reduced delay in the Puget Sound area alone
- ❑ \$10 million in reduced fuel costs for employees due to less driving
- ❑ \$5.8 million in reduced fuel costs due to less stop and go traffic
- ❑ Reduction of 4,800 tons of pollution
- ❑ Reduction of 50,200 tons of carbon dioxide

Because of the program's success, the Task Force recommends that the state continue to invest in CTR, and provide additional funding to address the expanded scope of the program. The CTR report is available on-line at www.wsdot.wa.gov/tm.





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send your questions and comments via e-mail to transit@wsdot.wa.gov,
or call WSDOT's Public Transportation and Commute Options Office at (360) 705-7911.

Mark Your Calendar

APTA Bus & Paratransit Conference

May 2-5, 2004
Denver, Colorado
Contact: Clarissa Ryan at (202) 496-4845 or
cryan@apta.com

Community Transit EXPO

June 12-18, 2004
Seattle, Washington
Contact: CTAA at (202) 661-0208 or
www.ctaa.org

Conference of Minority Transportation Officials

July 17-21, 2004
Cleveland, Ohio
Contact: (202) 289-0567

Washington State Public Transportation Conference

August 23-25, 2004
Yakima, Washington
Contact: WSDOT at (360) 705-7922

APTA 2004 Annual Meeting

October 10-13, 2004
Atlanta, Georgia
Contact: Cara Reeve at (202) 496-4874 or
creeve@apta.com

Sixteenth National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation

October 24-27, 2004
Roanoke, Virginia
Contact: Peter Shaw at pshaw@nas.edu